

In 301 AD, Saint Gregory the Illuminator brought Christianity to the entire country, leading Armenia to declare Christianity the official religion, making it the first Christian state in the world.

The Armenian Church has made great contributions often during times of strife and oppression as my friend from California (Mr. LANTOS) has pointed out, over the last 17 centuries.

Armenian Church leaders opened schools, cared for the sick and needy, and created an alphabet for Armenia and the Republic of Georgia in order to make scriptures more accessible to the people.

Armenians' devotion to God led them to create distinctive styles of manuscript illumination, architecture, sculpture, and textiles that are recognized as masterpieces of Christian art and as major contributions to world art. The Armenian Church continues to make significant contributions today through its ministry at home and its active participation in ecumenical bodies uniting Christians of all denominations throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming days, more than 100 communities around the United States will be celebrating this great anniversary with special worship and ecumenical services. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to author this resolution welcoming the Catholicos to the United States and honoring the 1700th anniversary of Christianity in Armenia.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution and affirming our strong ties and relationship with Armenia and the Armenian Church.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome the world leader of the Armenian Church, Catholicos Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, to celebrate the 1700th anniversary of Armenia's conversion to Christianity. His Holiness is a great moral and spiritual leader and it is an honor to have him as a guest in our country.

In 301 A.D., Armenia became the first Christian state in the world. At the time, Saint Gregory the Illuminator Christianized the entire country of Armenia, was consecrated the first Catholicos of Armenia, and baptized King Drtad of Armenia as a Christian. Consequently, King Drtad declared Christianity to be the official religion of Armenia.

Throughout our nation, Armenian communities will celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the coming of Christianity in Armenia with special worship and ecumenical services. On this day, we join the Armenian community, and His Holiness in celebrating the ideals and values shared by the people of the United States, the people of Armenia, and the Armenian Church in America.

It is truly a rare opportunity to have an important world religious leader such as His Holiness here with us to share his wisdom. His Holiness is accompanied by a large delegation consisting of the Supreme Council's members

and high-ranking clergy. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you join me in wishing His Holiness Karekin II, and the delegation, the best on his first official pontifical tour of the United States.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 139

Whereas the Armenian people have lived in their homeland for more than 3,000 years and created a unique civilization;

Whereas two of Jesus Christ's own disciples, Saint Thaddeus and Saint Bartholomew, introduced Christianity in Armenia and were the original founders of the Armenian Church;

Whereas in 301 A.D., Saint Gregory the Illuminator Christianized the entire country of Armenia, was consecrated the first Catholicos of Armenia, and baptized King Drtad of Armenia as a Christian;

Whereas in 301 A.D., King Drtad declared Christianity to be the official religion of Armenia, making it the first Christian state in the world;

Whereas Armenian Church leaders opened schools, cared for the sick and needy, and created alphabets for Armenia and Georgia to make the Scriptures more accessible to the people;

Whereas Armenians' devotion to God led them to create distinctive styles of manuscript illumination, architecture, sculpture, and textiles, that are recognized as masterpieces of Christian art and as major contributions to world art;

Whereas the Armenian Church has persevered in its faith throughout the past 17 centuries in cultures that were hospitable to it and others that were hostile;

Whereas the Armenian Church actively participates in ecumenical bodies and movements, uniting Christians of all denominations world-wide;

Whereas more than 100 communities throughout the United States will celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the acceptance of Christianity in Armenia with special worship and ecumenical services;

Whereas in celebration of the 1700th anniversary, His Holiness Karekin II will visit the United States;

Whereas the 1700th anniversary is an appropriate occasion to celebrate the ideals and values shared by the people of the United States, the people of Armenia, and the Armenian Church in America;

Whereas representatives of the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths, including representatives of the Armenian Church, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., will celebrate an ecumenical prayer service on May 30, 2001, at the Catholic Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the occasion of the 1700th anniversary;

Whereas the Armenian Church, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. have chosen the theme "Walking Together in the Light of Our Lord" as the message to embrace the ecumenical spirit of brotherhood on the occasion of the 1700th anniversary; and

Whereas the Armenian Church has established parishes throughout the United States

and has contributed to the quality of religious life in this Nation: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—*

(1) congratulates the Republic of Armenia on the occasion of the 1700th anniversary of the acceptance of Christianity in Armenia;

(2) welcomes His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, on his visit to the United States; and

(3) joins with the people of Armenia, the Armenian Church in America, and His Holiness Karekin II in celebrating the ideals and values they share with the people of the United States.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 139.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Mississippi?

There was no objection.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES WITH RESPECT TO PROHIBITING THE IMPORTATION OF ROUGH DIAMONDS FROM SIERRA LEONE—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 107-75)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Pursuant to section 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(b) (IEEPA), and section 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1631, I hereby report that I have exercised my statutory authority to expand the scope of an existing national emergency in response to the unusual and extraordinary threat posed to the foreign policy of the United States by the Government of Liberia's complicity in the illicit trade in diamonds from Sierra Leone by the insurgent Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) and by the Government of Liberia's other forms of support for the RUF. I also have exercised my statutory authority to issue an Executive Order that prohibits the importation into the United States of all rough diamonds from Liberia, whether or not such diamonds originated in Liberia. These actions are mandated in part by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1343 of March 7, 2001.